

**Computer Architecture and Assembly Language**  
**CS 251 - Spring 2022**  
**3 Credits**

**Instructor:** David Furey

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**Office Hours:** MWF 1:30 – 2:30 PM, TuTh 9:30 – 11:00 AM, or by appointment  
Location: Halsey 221

**Class Meetings:** MW 9:10 AM – 10:10 AM in Halsey 309  
F 9:10 AM – 10:10 AM in Halsey 101C

**Prerequisite:** A grade of C or better in CS 221

**Class Web Page:** [Canvas](#)

**You are expected to check the CS 251 Canvas course web site daily** since it will be constantly updated with materials for this class including daily slides, daily reading assignments, daily zyBook activities, and weekly lab handouts. **You are also expected to check your email daily** for course announcements.

**Required Text:** We will be using a zyBook for this class. Follow these instructions:

1. Click on a zyBook link in Canvas (e.g., the R1 link in the Day 1 module). Do NOT go to the zyBooks website to create a new account.
2. Subscribe

A subscription is \$77. Students may begin subscribing now. Subscriptions will last until May 27, 2022.

**Tests:** Exam #1: Week of March 7 ( $\pm$  one week with 10-day prior notice)  
Exam #2: Week of April 11 ( $\pm$  one week with 10-day prior notice)  
Exam #3: Week of May 9

**Catalog Course Description:** *An introduction to RISC-based instruction set architecture. Topics include: data representation, assembly language programming, run-time storage management, pointers and references as exemplified in the C++ programming language, and introduction to system software.*

Since the catalog description above is a bit out of date, here is an **updated course description:** This course aims to give students an overview of processor and memory hardware, and to teach them how high-level language programs map onto some Reduced Instruction Set Architecture or RISC computer. Students will learn how computer hardware supports the instruction set architecture. Students will be able to analyze why programs behave the way they do, how they can misbehave (e.g., buffer overflows), and how inefficiencies arise. Students will learn how to implement pointers and references in machine language.

**Course Outcomes:** At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Express characters and integers in binary, hexadecimal, signed and unsigned representations.
2. Determine whether overflows occur in signed or unsigned additions and subtractions of integers.
3. Write normalized and denormalized floating point numbers in single and double precision using the IEEE 754 Floating Point Standard.
4. Analyze the IEEE 754 Floating Point Standard and determine what integers cannot be represented exactly by the Floating Point Standard.
5. Organize the memory layout of global integers and characters assuming the Little-Endian and Big-Endian notations.
6. Edit an assembly language program, assemble the program and print output on console using Linux.
7. Design assembly language program given high-level source code.
8. Implement assembly language programs that read in integers from console, process the input and print results on the console.
9. Implement high-level language control structures in assembly language.
10. Implement one and two-dimensional arrays and control structures in assembly language (do-while, if-else, and for loop).
11. Write nested function calls using stack frames and local variables.
12. Write an assembly language program to call recursive functions.
13. Implement C/C++ pointers and references.
14. Implement pass-by-value and pass-by-reference parameter passing.
15. Describe a buffer overflow and why it is a potential security problem.

**Course Grading Policy:** Your final grade for this course will be based on the following seven components:

- a) **Daily reading assignments (R1, R2, etc.):** You will be assigned a selection of sections from our zyBook to read before 8:30 AM on each class day (MWF). Each reading assignment will include participation activities (PAs) that must also be completed by the same deadline as the reading. Your daily scores on these activities will be added up to make up your final score for this component. On some days (announced in advance) the reading assignment and associated PAs will only be **STRONGLY** recommended but not required (and thus not graded). This will most likely happen on some Fridays (i.e., lab days) when the reading assignments may be much longer (but mostly review material), e.g., one or two full chapters in the zyBook.
- b) **Daily challenge activities (C1, C2, etc.):** On most days, you will be assigned a selection of challenge activities (CAs) from our zyBook, namely those that appear in the sections that were part of the previous reading assignment. For example, you will be required to read the sections in R5 (and to complete the associated PAs) before 8:30 AM on Day 5 of the semester (that is, before we discuss these sections in class on Day 5) and then to complete the CAs (called C5) contained in R5 before 8:30 AM on Day 6, that is, on the next class day. You are given two or three extra days to complete the CAs to make sure that you have time to reread both the zyBook sections and your class notes and to ask lingering questions before being testing on the material covered by the CAs. Your daily scores on these CAs will be added up to make up your final score for this component.

- c) **Weekly labs (L1, L2, etc.):** Each Friday, you will complete a lab, that is, hands-on, programming activities in C or MIPS on Linux. In addition to the reading assignment for that day (always due at 8:30 AM before the lab), there will be a lab assignment to be completed and submitted to Canvas. Lab assignments are intended to be completed during the lab session and are officially due at 10:10 AM on Friday. However, each week, you will be granted a 100-hour penalty-free extension for each lab until 2:10 PM of the following Tuesday. Therefore, this will be the unofficial (but hard) deadline for each lab assignment. However, note that reading assignments due on a lab day are still due BEFORE the lab session, as stated above, since such reading assignments are meant to be pre-requisites to the lab activities. Unlike for PAs and CAs, all lab assignments will be given equal weight. Your weekly scores on these labs will be averaged to make up your final score for this component.
- d) **Weekly quizzes (Q1, Q2, etc.):** You will have to complete a weekly quiz on the material covered during the week(s) prior to quiz day. These quizzes will be completed in exam conditions (with no notes or calculator allowed) at the end of a regular class session. All quizzes will be equally weighted and your weekly scores will be averaged to make up your final score for this component.
- e) **Three exams (E1, E2, E3):** There will be three exams taken during regular class periods.

Your overall numerical grade for the course will be computed as the weighted sum of the component grades using the following weights:

Component	Weight
Reading assignments (and associated PAs)	15%
Challenge activities	10%
Labs	15%
Quizzes	15%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Exam #3	15%

Your final letter grade for the course will be computed using the following mapping:

Numerical Score	Grade	Numerical Score	Grade
$\geq 92$	A	$\geq 72$	C
$\geq 90$	A-	$\geq 70$	C-
$\geq 88$	B+	$\geq 68$	D+
$\geq 82$	B	$\geq 62$	D
$\geq 80$	B-	$\geq 60$	D-
$\geq 78$	C+	$< 60$	F

While this overall grading scheme is fixed, I will be happy to discuss any issue you may have with individual grades. If you notice a mistake or have a question regarding a specific grade,

please contact me *as soon as possible*. Do not wait until the end of the semester to bring up grading issues.

**Attendance and participation:** You are expected to not only attend **every** class meeting but also to come **prepared** for and participate actively in it. Necessary preparation requires you to have studied and assimilated the material covered in previous sessions, to have talked with the instructor outside of class to discuss any questions you may have, to have completed the reading assignments and associated zyBook activities, and to have completed prior lab assignments on time.

Note that the reading assignments and associated zyBook activities, i.e., PAs (resp., CAs), to be completed before (resp., after) each class, together account for 25% of your overall course grade. In fact, they are even more important to your success since the learning they foster will more or less directly impact your performance in the course as a whole, which will be tested in quizzes and exams.

**It is hard to imagine how a student could do well in this course while missing classes or assignments, attending classes unprepared, or not participating during/between them.**

On the positive side, I have high expectations for my students and will always support and encourage you. I **strongly encourage** you to **ask any question** or raise any issue you have with the course either during or at the end of class, or during my office hours. I will also gladly meet with you by appointment. Send me email to make an appointment. While I will meet with you as soon as my schedule permits, do not expect me to be widely available just before a big deadline, since many students may ask for help at the last minute.

**Late submissions:** **THERE WILL BE NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED ON ANY COMPONENTS OF THIS CLASS.** If your submission reaches me after the due date/time (even if it is late by only a few seconds, as recorded by Canvas), I will not grade it and you will receive a **zero**. Late submissions can easily be avoided by starting to work on each assignment right away and asking questions early if you get stuck.

The zero-score for late submissions can be waived in **only one** scenario, namely if you give me a signed note from a doctor or a written justification for the extension from the Dean of Students Office. If you miss an exam, you **may** be able to take a make-up exam provided you give me a valid justification (see above) ahead of time if possible. Only one make-up exam will be given. It will be a comprehensive exam scheduled at the end of the semester. If you miss a quiz, you **may** be able to take a make-up quiz, provided you have a valid justification for your absence.

**Collaboration versus Cheating:** All submissions must be the work of only one student, namely the one whose name appears on the submission. While it is acceptable and encouraged to discuss the reading assignments with others, you must submit your own work unless you can live with a zero and the other potential academic sanctions of cheating. Check out the [UWO Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures \(UWS 14\)](#) for details.

In conclusion, remember that computer science classes require a lot of work in addition to active participation in class. It takes considerable practice to develop the technical and analytical skills targeted by this course. You will need to spend **at least, and typically much more than, three**

**hours of effort outside of class for each in-class hour.** Having said this, I expect every hardworking student to do well in this course.

**Accommodations:** The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. It is the University's policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements.

Students are expected to inform instructors of the need for accommodations as soon as possible by presenting an Accommodation Plan from either the Accessibility Center, Project Success, or both. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared instructor and student responsibility.

The Accessibility Center is part of the Dean of Students Office and is located in 125 Dempsey Hall. For more information, email [accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu](mailto:accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu), call 920-424-3100, or visit the [Accessibility Center Website](#).

**Disclosure:** Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990:

<https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/resources/consumer-information/>

### **Classroom Mask Requirements**

All students are required to wear an appropriate face mask that covers their mouth and nose when they are in the classroom.

- Students who have a medical condition prohibiting them from wearing a face mask may present written documentation from their health care provider, stating that the individual cannot wear a face mask. Students must present this documentation to the Accessibility Center in the Dean of Students office. In these situations, face shields will be provided to that student through the Risk & Safety Office upon request from the Accessibility Center.

UWO procedure dictates that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, an instructor cannot begin class until all students are wearing a mask properly. If a student is non-compliant with the masking policy and also refuses to leave the classroom promptly when requested, the instructor is required to cancel class. Students responsible for class cancellation for these reasons will be referred to the Dean of Students office, and the student will be unable to attend class until they meet with the Dean of Students. The student may be dropped from the class by the Dean of Students.

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Diversity drives innovation, creativity, and progress. At the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the culture, identities, life experiences, unique abilities, and talents of every individual contribute to the foundation of our success. Creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable environment is of paramount importance to us. This pursuit prepares all of us to be global citizens who will contribute to the betterment of the world. We are committed to a university culture that provides everyone with the opportunity to thrive.

## **Eating or Drinking in the Classroom**

Students may drink beverages in the classroom but should only remove their mask when actively engaged in drinking. Eating is not allowed. There may be students who have a medical condition that requires them to eat at certain times of the day, or when certain symptoms present themselves. If, and only if, a student has documentation from the Accessibility Center in the Dean of Students office that they may eat during class will this be allowed. When possible, the student should be assigned a seat furthest away from other students to reduce risk of exposure of aerosols produced while eating. The student is expected to replace their mask as soon as they have finished eating.